

REMARKS

Initially, Applicants would like to express appreciation to the Examiner for the detailed Official Action provided, for the acknowledgment of Applicants' Claim for Priority and receipt of the certified copy of the priority document, and for the acknowledgment of Applicants' Information Disclosure Statements by return of the Forms PTO-1449. Applicants also note that the Examiner has not indicated that the drawings have been approved by the Official Draftsperson on a Form PTO-948. The Examiner is thus requested to indicate that Applicants' drawings are acceptable in the next Official Action.

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter in claims 7-19.

Upon entry of the above amendment, claims 1, 8-10, and 17 will have been amended, claims 6 and 7 will have been canceled, and newly presented claims 20 and 21 will have been added. Accordingly, claims 1-5 and 8-21 are currently pending. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the outstanding objection and rejections and allowance of claims 1-5 and 8-21 in the present application. Such action is respectfully requested and is now believed to be appropriate and proper.

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-3, 5, and 6 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by HOGAN (U.S. Patent No. 5,212,955). Applicants have amended claim 1 to include the subject matter of claim 7. Since such an amendment is equivalent to rewriting claim 7 in independent form and since the Examiner has indicated that claim 7 would be allowable if rewritten in

independent form, it is believed that the rejection of claim 1 has been overcome. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejection of claims 1-3 and 5 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over HOGAN.

Claim 6 has been canceled. Accordingly, it is believed that the rejection of claim 6 is now moot.

Newly presented claims 20 and 21 have been added. This amendment is fully supported by the specification, including the claims and drawings, and no prohibited new matter has been added. In particular, support for the addition of claims 20 and 21 can be found at least in the specification, paragraphs [0062] - [0067], and in figure 5.

Applicant submits that none of the references of record, considered alone or in any proper combination thereof, anticipate or render obvious Applicants' invention as recited in newly submitted claims 20 and 21.

Applicants submit that dependent claim 4, which is at least patentable due to its dependency from claim 1 for the reasons noted above, recites additional features of the invention and is also separately patentable over the prior art of record based on the additionally recited features. Accordingly, claim 4 is separately patentable for these additional reasons.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of all the rejections, and an early indication of the allowance of claims 1-5, and 8-21.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that the present amendment is proper and that none of the references of record, considered alone or in any proper combination thereof, anticipate or render obvious Applicants' invention as recited in claims 1-5 and 8-21.

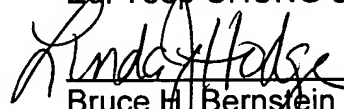
Accordingly, consideration of the present amendment, reconsideration of the outstanding Official Action, and allowance of the present amendment and all of the claims therein are respectfully requested and now believed to be appropriate.

Applicants have made a sincere effort to place the present application in condition for allowance and believe that they have now done so.

Any amendments to the claims which have been made in this amendment, and which have not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection base upon the prior art, should be considered to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to attach thereto.

Should the Examiner have any questions, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully Submitted,
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